

Statement on Strengthening Police and Judicial Institutions in Countries Where Peacekeeping Forces Are Deployed

February 24, 2000

I have just signed a Presidential decision directive (PDD) that will improve America's ability to strengthen police and judicial institutions in countries where peacekeeping forces are deployed. The PDD directs the Departments of State, Defense, and Justice to undertake a series of critical enhancements in the areas of police-military coordination as well as in police, penal, and judicial training and development.

In peacekeeping missions from the Balkans to East Timor, establishing basic law and order has been among the most important—and formidable—challenges. Developing effective local police forces, establishing credible court and penal systems, and reforming legal codes can make the crucial difference between building a just future and lapsing back into conflict.

When fully implemented, this PDD will help overcome major obstacles that currently confront

international peacekeeping operations. By enhancing cooperation between police and military peacekeepers, we will better ensure public security during these operations. By more effectively training and fielding international police monitors, we will better ensure that local police fairly and effectively prevent the breakdown of law and order in post-conflict societies. And by improving our ability to provide assistance to local judicial and penal institutions, we will better ensure accountability as well as confidence among local populations often traumatized by the conflicts they have endured.

We must do everything possible to improve our ability to help countries in transition to get the job done and to encourage other governments and the United Nations to be deeply engaged in these efforts.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in New York City

February 24, 2000

If I had any sense, I would quit while I'm ahead. [Laughter] Next time we have an argument, Shelby, I'm going to play that back to you. We tape everything like this. [Laughter] Thank you, Shelby. Thank you, Leo. Thank you, all of you, ladies and gentlemen, for being here tonight and for your support at, I think, a very critical time.

I would like to make just a few brief remarks, and I'd like to begin by thanking all of you for the contributions that you have made to America's prosperity. I have had occasion over the last couple of months—because we were coming up to February, and if the economy kept growing, then we knew it would be the longest economic expansion in our history and the first time we ever had an economic expansion remotely this long without a war somewhere in there chugging up things. And so—and I knew that I would be doing interviews and members of the press would be asking me, "Well, what caused all this?"

And I thank you for what you said. But if I could go back, my whole theory was, in 1991 and 1992 when I was running for President on the economic issues, is that there was this enormous pent-up capacity in the American economy; a whole culture of entrepreneurship; dramatic restructuring of traditional industries which had gone on in the 1980's in response to all the competition we had; by then, already 20, really almost a 40-year history, but certainly a 20-year history that went through my Republican predecessors as well, of having at least the Presidents always support open markets and expanded trade, which I think is a very important part of this whole strategy. And I think we should be doing more of it, and I'll say more about that in a minute.

But I had a feeling that there was something structurally amiss that kept holding us down. We'd go into these recessions and then we'd get out, but we had anemic recoveries. We were in the midst of a statistical recovery that was